JESUS CHRIST GOD AND MAN

REV. GEORGE D. SMITH

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JESUS CHRIST, GOD AND MAN

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JESUS CHRIST, GOD AND MAN

By the Reverend
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Introduction by
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INTRODUCTION

"Jesus Christ, God and Man" is the most fundamental article of our Catholic faith, nay even the very touchstone of Christianity. This belief the Christian holds not because flesh and blood, or human reason manifested it to him; for him the Incarnation of the Son of God is a mystery: Divine revelation alone could make known the fact; and even after the fact is revealed, its intimate nature still lies beyond the ken of human comprehension.

To the ordinary Christian the simple formula summing up the Scriptural teaching, "Jesus Christ is true God and true Man," suffices. With the educated Christian, however, still more with the theologian, it is different. He wishes to lift as much of the veil as is possible by reason, and for this purpose analyzes the ideas used in the formulation of the dogma, and asks himself how best can be explained the union of God and man in the one person of Christ. If, mindful of his limitations, with becoming humility he plumbs "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God," a more complete

and intimate understanding, begetting a deeper love for the Man-God shall be his reward. But woe to the high-minded "searcher of majesty!" Unfortunately his name is legion. For no dogma of faith seems to have been the occasion of so many misunderstandings and errors as that enunciated by St. John telling us that "the Word was made flesh." Nowhere in the field of theology have misinterpretation of plain Scripture texts and wilful misapprehension of abstruse metaphysical notions played greater havoc. Tirelessly has the Church from early times in her Councils re-stated with ever increasing preciseness her unwavering doctrine of the hypostatic union; yet incessantly the old errors periodically rise again from their ashes and reappear under flimsy disguises. That Christ is but a man—a great man, to be true; a genius, if you will; still only a man—is the tenet of many to-day as it was of the Arians and Adoptionists of old; and we have with us not a few who, casting aside the old definitions as relics of an effete philosophy, relegate the notion of substance to the realm of the unknowable and make self-consciousness the ultimate constituent of personality. These, by the very logic of their systems, are hopelessly floundering from the bog of Monophysitism into the pit of Nestorianism.

The necessity of clear thinking on this fundamental subject is therefore obvious. To this end has the present compendious treatise been added to "The Treasury of the Faith Series." That the Editor of the Series reserved to himself the delicate and difficult labor of digesting this theme, is highly gratifying: no one indeed is better qualified for such a task than the learned Professor of Dogmatic Theology of St. Edmund's, a profound theologian, an ardent lover of the Church's past, yet with an eye to the tendencies and needs of our times. Placing in its historical context every new step of the gradual progress in the formulation of the dogma, he leads the intelligent reader by degrees, through all the intricacies of the many questions arising from the hypostatic union, to what the Vatican Council calls "a most fruitful understanding of the mystery."

May this book, small in bulk, but rich in doctrine, bring to many that understanding which provokes meditation, leads to adoration and culminates in the love of Jesus Christ, God and Man!

CHARLES L. SOUVAY, C.M., D.D.

JESUS CHRIST, GOD AND MAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

A BOOK so small upon a subject so vast as "Jesus Christ, God and Man" seems to require a few preliminary words to define its scope. This is the first of four volumes in the present series devoted to the theology of the Incarnation, and its object is to explain, so far as space will permit, the doctrine of the hypostatic union, that is, the admirable union of the human and the divine nature in the adorable Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this is the fundamental truth regarding our holy Redeemer, and if this is denied or misconstrued all else that is said of him must be either false or inadequate.

Christ is the model of manhood, he is the exemplar of every human virtue and perfection, he is the man who has been loved and reverenced more than any other since the world began. But his human nature is perfect because it is the

humanity of God himself; his love has won all hearts because it is the human love of God. He is the Man of Sorrows, he stands out in history as the Sufferer. Well could he say through the mouth of his prophet, "Attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow";[1] there could be no other such sorrow because there could be no other human nature so sensitive and so perfect, none with such capacity for suffering as the humanity which God had made his own. He is our High-priest and Redeemer. But he could have been neither, unless he were both God and Man. By reason of his very Person he is the ideal Mediator between God and men; being man he can offer sacrifice to God; and because he is God his sacrifice is of infinite value.

The hypostatic union, therefore, is the foundation of the whole of the Catholic teaching about Christ. In fact, so dominated are Catholic theologians by the vital importance of this fundamental truth that they have been accused of emphasizing the divinity of Christ at the expense of his true manhood. "Although the Church theoretically maintains the humanity of Christ side by side with his divinity," wrote Sabatier,[2] "the latter inevitably absorbs every-

[1] Jer. Lament. i. 12.

[2] *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion* (Paris, 1897), pp. 179-180.

thing. The traditional Christology is incurably docetist; so much so that from this point of view it has become practically impossible to write a serious life of Jesus Christ." How little this accusation is justified may be seen from several monumental works on the life of Christ which have appeared in late years from the pen of Catholic scholars,[1] and also from the two immediately succeeding volumes of this series in which an account is given of the human life and experience of our Saviour. If the Church jealously safeguards the true divinity of Christ, she is no less intransigent upon his real humanity; for the one no less than the other is revealed by God, the one no less than the other is essential to the work of the Redemption.

Comparatively little space will be devoted in the present work to the purely scriptural basis of our faith in the divinity of Christ, in the first place because for those who accept the gospels as the inspired word of God, as all Catholics do, it is enough to read a few pages of the gospel of St John to be persuaded that Christ is truly God, and secondly because the faith of the Church on this point becomes luminously clear as we

[1] *e.g.* L. Fillion: *The Life of Christ*, tr. (Herder, 1928-30), 3 Vols.; L. Grandmaison: *Jésus Christ* (Beauchesne, 1928), 3rd ed.; Archbishop Goodier: *The Public Life of Jesus Christ* (Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1930), 2 Vols.

follow the Christological controversies of the first six centuries. The Catholic Church has ever re-echoed the profession of faith of St Peter, the rock and foundation upon which she is built: "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God"; so that the dogmatic Letter of Pope Leo I (449), in which the dogma of the hypostatic union was defined in precisely the same terms in which theologians teach it to-day, was acclaimed by the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon with the cry: "Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo."

To the history of these controversies more particular attention will be paid, since the study of them will enable us to understand the exact meaning of the famous dogmatic definitions of the Church on the union of the two natures in the one person of Christ. The fuller appreciation of all that is involved in the hypostatic union will lead us to consider its consequences as far as they concern the Person of the Word Incarnate, and in particular the preternatural and supernatural perfections of his human nature.

The theme is profound—for we are dealing with a mystery—and the manner of treatment must accordingly reflect something of the abstruse character of the subject. "So then, let our human weakness sink under God's glory, and ever find itself inadequate to the exposition

of the works of his mercy. Let our thoughts fail, let our minds be at a loss, let our utterance fade; for it is good that we should feel how imperfect are even our true thoughts concerning the majesty of the Lord." [1]

[1] St Leo, Serm. 11, *de Passione Domini.*

CHAPTER II

GOD WITH US

CHRISTIANITY has been defined as the religion of the Fatherhood of God; and, properly understood, the definition is perhaps as good as any that could be given. Even a superficial reading of the Gospels leaves the predominant impression that God is the Father; and St John himself seems to regard this as a suitable summing up of the Christian revelation when he says, "No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." [1]

But the definition is one which needs explanation. An entirely inadequate conception of Christianity would restrict the revelation of Christ to the bare statement that God is the provident Father of all his creatures, and in particular that he has a special care for the human race. If this were so, then Christ would have added little to what was already common knowledge among the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, or indeed to what the human reason is

[1] John i, 18.

able, even without revelation, to discern. The Jews, who knew their Scriptures well, could have found in any one page of their sacred books abundant evidence of the providential care of God for the chosen people of Israel, and the author of the Book of Wisdom speaks clearly enough of the wisdom of God that "reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly,[1] ordering all things in measure and number and weight";[2] for "he made the little and the great, and he hath equally care of all." But the revelation of Christ concerning the Fatherhood of God is a mystery "which in other generations was not known to the sons of men"; it had been "hidden from eternity in God, who created all things";[3] it is a "wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory." Hence when St Peter made his profession of faith in Christ, saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Christ answered him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Thus the apparently simple statement, that God is the Father, has a meaning unspeakably profound. Let us try, with all reverence, to penetrate it.

It is clear, first of all, that Christ presents

[1] viii, 1. [2] xi, 21. [3] Eph. iii, 5, 9.

himself as standing in a unique relation to God his Father. Already St Augustine had acutely remarked that he never places himself on a level with the rest of mankind by addressing God as "our Father." [1] He refers to God as *his* Father, and when he has occasion to associate himself with us he seems careful to preserve the distinction between our sonship and the much higher relationship in which he himself stands to God.[2] What that relationship is emerges clearly from numerous passages of the New Testament: he is the only-begotten of the Father. "God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him"; [3] formerly God had spoken to men through the prophets, now he spoke in his son; [4] formerly he had sent his "servants," and these had been mocked and spurned, now he sent "his own most dear son," whom he thought they might reverence.[5] He sent him that he might reveal the Father to mankind; for he alone had seen the Father.

It was an axiom with the Jews that no man could see God and live. "No man," says St John, "hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath

[1] *In Joannem*, tr. 21. 3.
[2] See Matt. xxv, 34; xxvi, 29; Luke xxiv, 49.
[3] 1 John iv, 9. [4] Heb. i, 1-2. [5] Mark xii, 1-12.

declared him."[1] The consequence is evident: Christ is God. He is the Son of God in the strictest sense of the word, the Son of God because he has received the divine nature from the Father by eternal generation. "All things," he says, "are delivered to me by my Father. And no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him."[2] The Father and the Son have an intimate and exclusive knowledge of each other, a knowledge which can be imparted to others only by a special favour. Christ could not have expressed more clearly his claim to be God; for none but God can see God as he is.

Christ, then, is the son of God by nature; and he came to reveal to us the Father, whose sons we are by adoption. "Behold," says St John,[3] "what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called and should be the sons of God. Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear we shall be like to him, for we shall see him as he is"; or, according to St Paul, "then I shall know even as I am known."[4] We are the sons of God by adoption, partakers of the

[1] John i, 18.
[2] Matt. xi, 27.
[3] 1 John, iii, 1 *seq.*
[4] 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

divine nature, as St Peter calls us, because we are destined by divine supernatural favour to enjoy that vision of God which is naturally proper to God himself alone. Christ is shown to be the only-begotten son of God, not merely a partaker of the divine nature, but truly and essentially God, because he enjoys this intimate and intuitive knowledge of the divinity as his own natural right.

This then is the meaning of the divine Fatherhood which Christ came to reveal to us: the true and only-begotten Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, assumes our human nature that we may be made partakers of his divinity; the divine life, which is in the Word incarnate in all its fulness, is communicated to us through his humanity; God's own Son lives and dies as man in our midst in order that we may become co-heirs with him of eternal life, adopted sons of God by a real participation in that divine nature which is his by eternal generation. This association of mankind with Christ in his relation to the Father, and yet this contrast between his natural filiation and our own adoptive sonship, may truly be said to constitute the essence of the Christian revelation.

In the light of Christ's divine sonship strictly so-called the mysterious announcement of the Angel Gabriel to his blessed Mother becomes

luminously clear: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called [1] the Son of God." [2] No wonder then that her cousin Elisabeth hailed her as blessed among women, humbly confused by the honour of this visit from the "mother of her Lord"; no wonder that the Precursor himself, though yet unborn, is constrained to give testimony to the presence of the divine Messias by leaping in his mother's womb. We may also note as particularly significant the fact that the first spoken words of Christ related in the Gospel are a reference to his divine Sonship—"Know you not that I must be about my Father's business?" [3]—and that his public life begins with a most solemn revelation of his unique relationship to the Father: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well-pleased." [4] Hence he justly claimed a love and a reverence due to God alone; [5] since he is eternal he lived before the time of Abraham; [6] he has power to forgive sins by his own authority, a power which the Pharisees recognized to be divine. [7] Being the Son of God he spoke with au-

[1] A hebraism for "shall be."
[2] Luke i, 35.
[3] Luke ii, 49.
[4] Matt. iii, 17.
[5] John vi, 29-47; xi, 26; xiv, 1; xiv, 21-28; xvi, 7-13.
[6] *Ibid.* viii, 52-56.
[7] Mark ii, 1-12.

thority, no longer merely conveying a message from God, as the prophets had done, "Thus saith the Lord," but making laws in his own name: "I say unto you"; he had power to perfect, and if necessary even to set aside as obsolete, the prescriptions of the Old Testament; he is greater than David, he is Lord of the Sabbath. Nor did the Jews misunderstand his claim. They knew well that he was calling himself God. "Art thou then the Son of God?" asked Caiphas; and when Jesus answered that he was indeed, he was accused of blasphemy and regarded as worthy of death.[1] This was the reason why from the beginning they had sought to kill him. It was not because of his works that they took up stones to cast at him, but for blasphemy, and because being a man, he made himself God,[2] and "because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal to God." [3]

His disciples, too, had well understood their Master's teaching. "Being in the form of God," says St Paul,[4] "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." The same Apostle in his epistle to the Colossians gives us a sublime description of the person and preroga-

[1] Luke xxii, 67-71.
[2] John x, 30-33.
[3] *Ibid.* v, 16-17.
[4] Phil. ii, 6-7.

tives of Christ. Having called him the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creatures, (*i.e.* born before all creatures) he continues, in a passage so magnificent that any commentary would but weaken its force: "In him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . . and he is before all, and by him all things consist." The opening words of the epistle to the Hebrews are reminiscent of the first chapter of the Gospel of St John, so explicitly do they affirm that Christ is God: "God . . . in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power . . . sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, 'Thou art my Son, to-day hath I begotten thee'?"[1]

But most clearly of all speaks St John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. It was to prove that Christ was God that he wrote what we know as the fourth gospel. "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his

[1] i, 15 *seq.*

name." [1] His account of the life of Christ opens with words very similar to the first words of the book of Genesis. But whereas the author of the Pentateuch was concerned only with the origin of created things, St John speaks of the timeless origin of the Word, born of the Father from all eternity: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." When the universe came into being he, the Word, already was, for it was through him that all things were made. He came forth from God into the world as the light into the darkness, to reveal the Father to mankind and to enable men to be born again as the adopted sons of God, raised by God's favour to be brethren of Christ, the only-begotten of the Father. Such is the theme of the prologue of the fourth gospel; such is the theme throughout: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

But he who proclaims himself so clearly to be God is undoubtedly also a man. He is conceived and born of a human mother. We see him now as an infant, now as a young boy, growing in stature and in wisdom. He grows to manhood, living in subjection to his poor and humble parents. We see him finally as a grown man; he is truly a man, subject to the ordinary laws of human life; he is hungry and eats, he is weary

[1] xx, 31.

and rests, he is sorrowful and weeps, he suffers and dies. In all things he behaves as a man; he is a man. St John, who is so solicitous to show that Christ is God, is no less emphatic concerning the reality of his human nature. The apostles had touched him with their hands, they had seen him with their eyes; they knew that he was a man.[1] And they knew also that he was God.

God with us; Jesus Christ, God and Man. This is the mystery of the Incarnation.

[1] 1 John i, 1.

CHAPTER III

DENIALS AND DEFINITIONS

THE doctrine of the Incarnation as stated at the end of the previous chapter is a stupendous truth, but its formulation contains no words that may be called technically philosophical. Equally simple is the language of the Apostles' Creed in which we profess our belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified and died for us. And so indeed the dogma of the Incarnation was expressed during the first two centuries of the Christian era. The early (or Apostolic) Fathers, in teaching this, as the other doctrines of the Church, use the terminology of Scripture. It was only when with the rise of heresy it became important to emphasize now this and now that aspect of the truth, that the dogmas of the faith were formulated with greater technical precision.

Of the first heresies concerning the Person of Christ we already find mention in the New Testament. These errors take the form either of denying the true humanity of Christ or of rejecting his true divinity, and in either form they

had a more or less continuous history during the first four centuries of the Christian era. The Gnostics, and later the Manicheans of the second and third centuries, held that matter was essentially evil, the product of the god of evil. For this reason they denied the resurrection of the body and also the possibility of any association of God with matter. Evidently to such the idea of a divine incarnation was repugnant. In the endeavour to make a compromise between Christianity and their philosophical tenets they taught that Christ had not a real body, but merely the appearance of a body, thus reducing the whole of Christ's human life to a pretence; hence the name given to these heretics, the Docetists (from οκειν, to appear). St Paul is probably referring to early advocates of this view when, in his second epistle to Timothy,[1] he speaks of the followers of a false science that merits not the name, and insists upon the mediatorship of the *man* Christ Jesus. The epistles of St John also contain clear references to these early opponents of the Incarnation. "Everyone," he says, "that confesseth not Jesus in the flesh is not of God." [2] Hence the emphatic opening of his first letter: "What we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands of the word of life

[1] vi, 20.

[2] 1 John iv, 3; *cf.* 2 John 7.

. . . that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you."

Docetism was refuted later in turn by St Irenaeus, Tertullian, and St Augustine. Tertullian, in particular, wrote a complete work, *De Carne Christi,* against the docetism of the Marcionites.

But more dangerous and more long-lived were the heresies that denied the divinity of Christ. A Jewish sect, the Ebionites, held that Christ, the son of Joseph and Mary, was a great man indeed, but yet a mere man. The spirit of God, they said, descended upon him at his baptism, raising him to the dignity of adopted son of God. It was against this heresy that St John wrote his Gospel to prove the divinity of Christ, and it is to this sect that he refers in his first epistle as the antichrist who denies that Jesus is the Son of God.[1] Certain Jews who set the angels higher than Jesus are refuted by St Paul in his epistle to the Colossians, and the same are probably in his mind when, at the beginning of his epistle to the Hebrews, he extols the majesty of Christ above all the categories of the heavenly spirits: "To whom of the angels hath he said at any time, 'Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee'?"

This error appeared again in Rome at the

[1] ii, 22, 23.

end of the second century under the name of Adoptianism, associated with the names of Theodotus the Cobbler and Theodotus the Banker. Here too the champion of orthodoxy was Tertullian, who in this connection has given us a treatise on the divinity of Christ, *Adversus Praxean*. In fact it is in this work that Tertullian provides the first attempt at a technical formulation of the mystery of the Incarnation: "We see plainly the twofold state, which is not confounded, but conjoined in one Person, Jesus Christ, God and man. . . . Forasmuch as the two substances [1] acted distinctly each in its own character, there necessarily accrued to them severally their own operations and their own issues." [2]

A similar doctrine to that of Theodotus—but with a more important outcome—was taught in the East by Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch (*c.* 260). The mention of the see of Antioch makes it opportune at this point to call attention to the two great theological schools of Alexandria and Antioch, which played so important a part in the Christological controversies of the fifth century. The school of Antioch was characterized by a spirit of rigid adherence to

[1] "Natures," we should say.

[2] Ch. 27. Note the similarity between this passage and the famous Dogmatic Letter of Leo the Great. *Cf.* p. 32.

the letter of Scripture and by the tendency to view theological problems from a positive standpoint. Thus the Antiochenes approached the study of the Person of Christ from what we may call the historical angle. Christ was portrayed in the Gospels as being God and as being also man; hence they tended to insist upon the distinction of the two natures in Christ. The Alexandrian spirit, on the other hand, was mystical and speculative, and the theologians of that school were inclined to stress rather the unity of Christ than the distinction of his two natures. The exaggeration of these tendencies led respectively to the heresies of Nestorianism and Monophysism. Paul of Samosata, then, taught that Christ was a man, but a man in whom the mind of God—the Logos—dwelt in a special way; if he is called God it is only by reason of his intimate union with the Word of God. This doctrine, condemned in a synod of Antioch (267-268), is important because it was the prelude to Arianism which denied the divinity of the Word.

The end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth were occupied with the great Trinitarian heresies, into which we cannot enter here, except to remark that the Christological problem could not be precisely formulated or solved until the Catholic doctrine of

the Trinity of Persons in God had been put beyond misunderstanding. It was obviously premature to discuss the exact relation of the human nature to the divine nature in Christ until the divinity of the Word was vindicated against heretics. With the Council of Nicea in 325 this was done, and the arena was thus cleared for the great Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.

We may conveniently resume our study of these with Diodore, bishop of Tarsus (378), founder of the second great school of Antioch. Anxious, in accordance with the Antiochene tradition, to safeguard the integrity of the two natures in Christ, Diodore, as far as we are able to gather from the fragments of his works that remain, accentuated the distinction between Christ's humanity and divinity to the point of separation, so that for him God is one person and Christ another. These two were intimately united, indeed, but only as God is intimately united with a creature in whom he dwells as in a temple and in whom he works his will. The influence of Paul of Samosata is manifest. Nevertheless it is only fair to remember that other influences were at work. The school of Alexandria at the same time had a leader whose exaggerations in the opposite sense Diodore

justly reprobated, namely, Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea (360).

The teaching of Apollinaris is typical as showing the excesses to which insistence upon the unity of Christ could lead. It seemed to him that if the human nature of Christ was admitted to be complete it must constitute a human person distinct from the Person of the Word. One would thus, he argued, be reduced to the heresy of Paul of Samosata, now renewed by Diodore of Tarsus, that Christ the son of Mary was one person and the Son of God another. The only way, he thought, of saving the unity of Christ was to admit that his humanity was incomplete, lacking in some essential element which the Word, by uniting himself with it, would supply. He therefore taught that Christ lacked an intellectual soul,[1] the place of this being taken by the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Hence while Diodore sacrificed the unity of the Person of Christ to the integrity of his two natures, Apollinaris had recourse to the mutilation of his humanity in order to save the unity of his Person.

These two opposite excesses, that of Diodore

[1] Arius had taught that the Word took the place of a human soul in Christ. But Apollinaris differed from Arius inasmuch as he distinguished three elements in man, body, soul, and spirit, *i.e.* intellect. The last-named is proper to man, and this was lacking to the humanity of Christ.

and that of Apollinaris, led subsequently to the two famous heresies of Nestorianism and Monophysism. It may not, however, be out of place here to remind the reader that these men were, as far as we know, sincerely groping after a precise statement of the scriptural truth that Christ is both God and man. Neither school, Antiochene or Alexandrian, set out with the professed object of denying either the integrity of his human nature or the unity of his Person. It was no doubt their honest endeavour to safeguard both; but the fact is that in seeking for an expression of the truth they fell into heresy.

More famous than Diodore was his pupil, Theodore of Mopsuestia (392-428), who synthesized and developed the theory already outlined by his master. True to the Antiochene tradition, he emphasized the reality and the completeness of Christ's human nature. The humanity of Christ was united to God, he said, because God dwelt therein as in a temple. In Christ God had put his complacence, and in him willed to accomplish all things; and since Christ was the temple of the divinity he shared with God the honours of divine worship. Nevertheless, in spite of the exuberant terms in which Theodore extols the union of Christ with God, it remains that Christ and God are two different

persons; God was in Christ, but Christ was not God.

Throughout this controversy it is the so-called "communication of properties" that is the touchstone of orthodoxy. If Christ was one individual who was truly God and truly man, then the properties and activities of either the human or the divine nature might with equal truth be attributed to him. If God truly became man, while remaining God, one might say of him that God died on the cross, that he was born of the Virgin Mary, that Mary was the mother of God, that Christ, who was passible and mortal according to his humanity, was omnipotent, eternal, the Creator of all things, according to his divinity. Now it was precisely here that the Christology of Theodore failed. He refused to admit that Mary was Theotokos—Mother of God. The same acid test revealed the heresy of his still better known disciple, Nestorius.

This man, with whom the heresy we have been describing is historically always associated, became Patriarch of Constantinople in the year 427. In the following year he made known his views on the Person of Christ when he defended one of his priests, Anastasius, who in a sermon had refused to Our Lady the title of

Mother of God. It was the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia publicly proclaimed, and it caused a great stir in Constantinople, where both clergy and laity soon became divided into two parties.

St Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, now entered the lists against Nestorius, and an acrimonious dispute followed which culminated in the condemnation of the latter at the Council of Ephesus in 431. It is beyond the scope of this little book to describe at any length the intrigues that preceded, accompanied, and followed the Council. Some modern historians have tried to show that Cyril was actuated chiefly, if not solely, by motives of jealousy in his opposition to Nestorius; the latter being represented as the champion of orthodoxy, unjustly persecuted by his powerful rival at Alexandria. But a sober consideration of the documents leads one inevitably to the conclusion that, while the antagonism between the rival sees cannot be overlooked as a factor in the situation, nevertheless Nestorius was definitely unorthodox, while Cyril, despite some inexactitudes of expression—not unnatural in view of the vagueness of current terminology—stood for the traditional teaching of the Church on the Person of the Word Incarnate.

It is impossible to form anything like a just

estimate of the merits of this monumental controversy without some understanding of the terms used by the participants. In fact the vagueness of the language of either side contributed in no small measure to the prolongation of the dispute. The words used nowadays by the Catholic theologian in formulating the dogma of the Incarnation have a definite meaning, so that, to the Catholic at any rate, it is clear enough what is meant when it is said that in Christ there are two natures and one person. Not so to the Greek of the fifth century. He did not possess even the clear Greek equivalents of "nature" and "person." The difficulty of terminology had already been acutely felt in the discussions on the Trinity, in which it had been necessary to find words to express the unity of the divine essence or nature on the one hand, and the Trinity of divine persons on the other. Four words were available: οὐσία, φύσις, ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον. After a great deal of discussion it was agreed to use the word *ousia* to indicate the one divine essence and to reserve the word *hypostasis* for person. The word *phusis* (nature) was little used in connection with the Trinity. The word *prosopon,* the exact Greek equivalent of the Latin *persona,* was for a long time suspect, since it had been used by the Sabellians in an

unorthodox sense;[1] but eventually it was accepted as the equivalent of *hypostasis*. For the purposes of Trinitarian doctrine the rough and ready distinction made by St Basil between *ousia* and *hypostasis* served well enough. The essence, he said, is that which is common to all the individuals of a species, while the person adds to the essence the individual characteristics that distinguish them one from another. But the explanation is superficial, and its inadequacy became apparent when applied to the Christological problem of two concrete natures subsisting in one person.

Nestorius said that in Christ there were two φυσικὰ πρόσωπα, two physical persons, but only one πρόσωπον ἑνωσεως, one person of union. What did he mean? Apparently, that so far as their physical reality was concerned the human nature and the divine nature in Christ were distinct. This, of course, was perfectly true. But what did he mean by the "person of union"? The person of union, for Nestorius, had a particular name: "Christ," and was simply the man Christ, considered as endowed with the special indwelling of God. Hence Mary, he said, was

[1] The Sabellians used the word in the etymological sense of a mask, or character, and said the one person was called Father, Son or Holy Ghost according to the activities he exercised in relation to creatures. See Vol. IV, p. 7.

Christotokos, Mother of Christ; to call her *Theotokos,* Mother of God, was to confuse the natures and to make Mary the mother of the divinity.

On the other hand, Cyril of Alexandria made frequent use of the word *phusis,* nature. His axiom was: "The incarnate nature of the Word is one." Nestorius said that this was simply the heresy of Apollinaris; and surely enough it was, if Cyril had used the words in the sense in which Apollinaris had used them. But by *phusis* or nature Cyril did not mean what Apollinaris meant, nor what we mean by nature. When Cyril said that the incarnate nature of the Word was one he meant that Christ was one concrete individual, God and Man, which of course was perfectly orthodox. Why, then, did he not say that Christ was one person who had two natures? Simply because there were no words which were quite unequivocal to indicate person and nature. If he had said "one *prosopon*" he would not sufficiently have distinguished his doctrine from that of Nestorius, who also, but in his own sense, admitted one *prosopon* in Christ, namely, the *prosopon* of union, by which God dwelt in Christ as in a temple. Hence Cyril, to indicate that the union of divinity and humanity in Christ was in the substantial order of personality, used the word *phusis,* and spoke of a "physical union" as op-

posed to a moral union. "A physical union," he explains, "that is a true union, . . . a union according to hypostasis." [1]

But it is easy to understand why Nestorius, and many others, took exception to the language of Cyril. To speak of a physical union of the two natures in Christ was to lay himself open to the accusation of holding with Apollinaris that the two natures are merged in one, and that the human nature of Christ was not complete. He found it necessary on this account to justify himself and to explain the sense in which he used these equivocal phrases.

This being so, the real discussion was centred upon a point which is really a consequence of the unity of Christ's person, that of the divine Motherhood of Mary. Here Cyril was on firm ground and here the heresy of Nestorius became manifest. It was vain for the latter to declare that to admit the Divine Motherhood of Mary was to make Mary the mother of the divine nature. What Cyril insisted was, not that Mary had given birth to the divinity—that would be absurd—but that the same individual, the Word, who was born eternally of the Father according to the divinity, was born in time of the Virgin Mary according to his humanity. It was precisely this that Nestorius denied, and his

[1] *Apol. pro* xii *cap.* (P.G. 76, 332, 405.)

denial of Mary's divine Motherhood showed him to be unorthodox on the Incarnation.

Nestorius, then, was condemned and deposed from his see by the Council of Ephesus. John, the Patriarch of Antioch, for some time defended Nestorius, but two years later he was reconciled with Cyril, and the agreement of Alexandrians and Antiochenes was recorded in the "Symbol of union" of 433. In this document the Antiochene contention that the two natures of Christ, human and divine, were complete and unmingled was embodied, while the Alexandrian solicitude for the unity of the person of Christ was fully satisfied by the statement that one and the same individual who was born eternally of the Father according to the divinity was the son of Mary according to his humanity, and the right of Mary to the title of "Mother of God" was explicitly acknowledged.

The exaggerations of what we may call the "separatist" school of thought had been condemned and the unity of the person of Christ was vindicated. But not everybody was yet satisfied. There was still no terminology sufficiently exact to exclude all misunderstanding. It has been seen that Cyril had spoken of one nature in Christ, and although this expression had been excluded from the "Symbol of Union" and Cyril, for the rest, had used it in an orthodox

sense as meaning one person in Christ, yet some of the disciples of Cyril were not so orthodox as their master. Among these was a foolish old man named Eutyches, who by his indiscreet zeal and ignorance gave rise in the year 448 to a further doctrinal dispute, regrettable no doubt for the peace of his contemporaries, but providential inasmuch as it led to that amplification and exactness given to the formularies of belief which made all further equivocation impossible.

Eutyches refused to admit that the body of our Lord was consubstantial (of the same nature) with ours, or that after the union in him of human and divine natures it was legitimate to speak of *two* natures. Whatever may have been the inner belief of the simple old monk, the refusal to admit that Christ had a body like ours gave rise to suspicion since it left room to doubt whether according to such a view there had been any real Incarnation at all. As for his rejection of the phrase "two natures," he said, Cyril had spoken of one nature, and he did not intend to depart from the teaching of his master. It was the old difficulty of terminology again.

Without considering the various phases of the new heresy of Monophysism, it is sufficient to note two things: first, that just as Nestorianism represented the *reductio ad absurdum* of the

Antiochene tendency to separate the natures, so Monophysism is the heresy involved in exaggerating the unity of Christ. Cyril had said "one nature" and had been orthodox in meaning; the Monophysites said "one nature" and were unorthodox, because they meant that the two natures were merged into one. The second important thing about Monophysism is that, on appeal being made to Rome to settle this second dispute, the Dogmatic Letter of Pope Leo I was written, a letter afterwards adopted as the rule of faith by the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451.

This famous letter is important by reason of its wonderful precision of language. While in the East there had been the verbal misunderstandings which we have described, the theologians of the West had been but little troubled with such difficulties. We have seen that the Latin terminology was already clearly defined at the beginning of the third century with Tertullian, who already speaks of a "twofold state, not confounded but conjoined in one Person Jesus Christ." Thanks to this early crystallization of the dogma, theologians in the West were little affected by the Christological controversies which divided the East for well-nigh a hundred years. Clear thinking, clearly expressed is the keynote of Pope Leo's letter: "The properties of

the two natures being safeguarded and being united in one person, majesty took upon itself humility, power weakness, eternity mortality; and to pay our debts an impassible nature was united to a passible one, so that one and the same mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, might on the one hand die and on the other be immortal. . . . Each nature keeps what is proper to it, and just as his divine condition does not destroy his human condition, so his condition of servant does not diminish his divinity."

Little else remained to be done in the Councils of Chalcedon (451) and Constantinople II (553) than to consolidate the advance already made, by enshrining in an official formula the terminology upon which agreement had been achieved. The following extracts from their decrees need no commentary. From the Council of Chalcedon: "In accordance with the teaching of the holy Fathers we all profess our faith in one and the same Son and Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in his divinity, perfect in his humanity, having a rational soul and a body,[1] consubstantial with the Father according to the divinity,[2] the same consubstantial with us according to his humanity, 'in all things like as we are except sin'; born before all ages of the Father according to the divinity, and the same in these last

[1] As against Apollinarianism. [2] As against Arianism.

days born of Mary the Virgin Mother of God for us and for our salvation; one and the same Christ the Lord and only begotten Son *in two natures* without confusion, change, division or separation, the difference of the natures being in no way suppressed by their union, but the proper manner of existence of each being safeguarded, while each nature is united with the other *in one person and hypostasis.*"[1] From the second Council of Constantinople: "If any one understand the one hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ as if it might mean several hypostases and therefore attempt to introduce into the mystery of Christ two hypostases or two *prosopa,* saying that the two prosopa thus introduced are one according to dignity and honour and adoration, as Theodore (of Mopsuestia) and Nestorius in their madness wrote; calumniating the holy Synod of Chalcedon as if it had used the words 'one hypostasis' in this impious sense; and does not rather confess that the Word of God was united to flesh *according to hypostasis,* and that on this account his hypostasis or prosopon is one, and that in this sense the holy Council of Chalcedon confessed the hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ to be one, let such an one be anathema."

[1] As against Monophysism and Nestorianism.

CHAPTER IV

ONE PERSON

THE doctrine of the Incarnation as revealed to us in Scripture may be stated in these simple terms: Christ is one individual who is both God and man. The Council of Chalcedon defined that Christ is one person who has two natures, united by a hypostatic union. The second formulation of the mystery contains nothing more than the first; it merely states the same truth in technical and precise terms. But although the terms nature and person may have a particular philosophical connotation, the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon in defining the dogma of the hypostatic union had not in mind any esoteric meaning to be attached to them: the words were used in their popular sense.

What they meant when they said that Christ was one person may be clearly seen from the controversies which led up to the definition. They meant that he is one individual, one subject of attribution; and this is the meaning that we ordinarily attach to the word. When we speak of a person we mean a complete existing

rational[1] being who has his own distinct individuality, incommunicable to others; one to whom we attribute his own actions, saying that *he* thinks, *he* sits, *he* walks, and so on. This "selfness" or personality we understand to be absolutely incommunicable; and it is here, perhaps, that we reach the essential element of personality. The sense of being alone when I am in mental distress, the feeling that "I must work this out for myself," that nobody can possibly understand my difficulties, these are but evidences in my consciousness of that splendid, yet in many ways awesome, isolation from every other individual of my species which constitutes my personality.

The word nature, too, has a definite meaning in popular usage. The nature is that which makes a thing *what* it is; it is that composite unity of substances, qualities, and powers by means of which a person acts in a particular way, and in consequence of which he belongs to a particular category or class of being. Now ordinarily a complete existing human nature is a human person. But the Council of Chalcedon defined that there is an unique exception to this

[1] The name "person" is reserved for rational or intellectual beings. An irrational or inanimate individual is called by the generic name of "individual," philosophically a "hypostasis," or *suppositum*.

rule in the case of the humanity of Christ which, although it is complete and existing, is nevertheless not a human person. The humanity of Christ was from the very first moment assumed, appropriated, by the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, so that Christ is a divine Person, having two natures, a human nature and the divine.

It can hardly be stressed too much that the doctrine of the hypostatic union thus defined is nothing more than the revealed doctrine of the Incarnation: "The Word was made flesh." It is not the fruit of human speculation upon the revealed word of God; it is not a theological conclusion; it is itself a divine revelation. Hence the hypostatic union precisely as such can never be the subject of debate among Catholic theologians. Upon this all Catholics are, and must be, agreed, that the human nature of Christ, though real and complete, does not constitute a human person distinct from the Son of God; that the one person of Christ is the divine Person of the Word who, subsisting eternally in the divine nature, in the fulness of time took upon himself a human nature and thus is both truly God and truly man.

But the theologian is not content to stop here. In his legitimate desire to enter more deeply into the meaning of the divine mysteries by apply-

ing to them the principles of human reason, in order to show that although these mysteries are beyond our comprehension they are not contrary to reason, he analyses the ideas which are used in the formulation of revealed truth, thus arriving at what the Vatican Council calls "a most fruitful understanding of mysteries." Hence Catholic theologians, while admitting, as in duty bound, that the humanity of Christ is not a human person, proceed further to inquire the reason why. What is lacking, they ask, to this humanity, the presence of which would make it a human person? What does the Word supply in this mysterious union so as to make Christ a divine Person? What, in other words, precisely constitutes personality? Three questions, clearly, which are really one; put in the first two forms the question is theological; in its last form it is purely philosophical. And as the answer given to the third question varies, so also different answers are given by theologians to the other two.

Since the problem of personality is primarily a philosophical one it does not belong to the theologian as such to attempt to solve it. Nevertheless the Catholic philosopher is not entirely free to solve it as he wills. Suppose, for example, that he forms the opinion—for the rest an erroneous one—that what constitutes personal-

ity is the human soul; there have been philosophers who have held this view. Even apart from the metaphysical objections to the theory, such a position is impossible for the Catholic as a theologian, because it would lead him logically to the heresy of Arius concerning the person of Christ. Holding as a Catholic theologian that the humanity of Christ lacked what was necessary to make him a human person, he would be forced to the conclusion that Christ had no human soul and that the place of this was taken by the Word; this is exactly what Arius taught. Or, if as a philosopher he held that the human intellect is the essential element in personality, as a theologian he would logically be an Apollinarist, holding that Christ lacked a human intellect, the place of this being supplied by the divine Logos.

Hence the answer given to the philosophical question is by no means a matter of indifference to the theologian. He cannot accept a philosophical view of personality which is irreconcilable with the dogma of the Incarnation. In fact a moment's thought will show that, if the truth of the hypostatic union is to be safeguarded, the constitutive element of personality must be sought outside the nature itself. Any philosophical theory identifying the notion of person with that of nature, or making some

element of the nature (such as intellect, will, consciousness) the essential constituent of personality, cannot but have disastrous results in Christology. And the reason is that Christ has a perfect and complete human nature, and yet is not a human person. Whatever it may be, therefore, that the Word supplies to the humanity of Christ to make him a divine person, it is certainly not a part of his human nature.

That this distinction between nature and person is crucial in the matter of the hypostatic union was felt strongly by the Fathers of the Vatican Council, who, in view of certain errors current in Germany in the nineteenth century, had prepared the following scheme for a definition on the mystery of the Incarnation: "Just as in the holy Trinity three distinct persons subsist in one person, so in Christ, on the other hand, one person subsists in two distinct and different natures. Therefore, in accordance with the teaching of the Fathers all must understand that the notion of essence, substance, or nature is by no means to be confused with the notion of hypostasis, subsistence [1] or person, lest one be led into making the statement—manifestly subversive of the sacred dogmas—that there are as many persons as there

[1] The Latin equivalent of hypostasis.

are intellectual or—to use the modern expression—conscious natures."[1]

But within the just limits set by orthodoxy theologians enjoy freedom of discussion. Some content themselves with the theory that the humanity of Christ was prevented from being a human person by the very fact that it was assumed by the Word. A human nature is a person, they maintain, if it is not assumed by another; but the humanity of Christ was assumed by the Word; therefore it is not a human person. But this explanation, it is urged, fails to explain anything. The question is precisely why the humanity of Christ was capable of being assumed, why, in other words, it was not incommunicable. To answer that in fact it was assumed, or communicated, seems equivalent to evading the point at issue. If, as these theologians maintain, the humanity of Christ possessed the whole reality that is required to constitute it as a human person, it is difficult to see why it actually lacked human personality. Hence others, dissatisfied with this theory, have seen the need of postulating some real complemental

[1] It is important, however, to notice that the above statement enjoys no greater authority than that of the theologians who formulated it. It is a theological statement upon which all Catholics are agreed; but, since it was never discussed or embodied by the Council in its published decrees, it is not as such an article of faith.

entity which, added to the nature, makes it a person, and have held that personality consists in what they call a "substantial mode" distinct from the nature, which has the effect of rendering the nature complete in itself and incommunicable. Others, finally—and with these the writer is inclined to agree—find the constituent of personality in the real act of existence which is the connatural complement of every created nature or essence.

It has been pointed out elsewhere in this series[1] that "the universe and the minds of men are composite, for in them essence and existence are not one, but are two distinct (though inseparable) principles. . . . The distinction between 'essence' and 'existence' in the universe (whether considered in part or in whole) is no invention of the human mind, but, like all other real distinctions, is objective in things themselves. Observation makes us aware that things not only have existence, but over and above existence they have each also a distinct fabric of a given kind which we call their nature or essence. Existence tells us *that* a thing is, while knowledge of its essence tells us *what* a thing is. To know *that* a thing exists is very different from knowing what particular nature it consists in. Consequently we always think of

[1] Vol. III: "God and his Attributes," p. 2.

things and persons as *possessing* existence rather than as constituting it."

Hence, according to this commonly accepted view, an individual nature receives that incommunicability which is characteristic of the hypostasis or person from its own act of existence, an activity distinct from the nature as such. Why is the human nature which I possess incommunicable to any other individual of the same species? Precisely because I exist, because this nature of mine has the act of existence which is its natural complement. If, therefore, a human nature were without its own connatural existence it would not be a human person. And this was the case with the humanity of Christ which, having all that is required for the perfection of humanity—body, soul, and faculties, even as we have—existed not by its own connatural act of existence, but by the infinite subsistence of the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who thus communicated to that human nature a divine Personality. Christ, therefore, is a divine Person because that in him which constitutes personality, namely, the act of existence, is not human but divine.

But whatever may be the solution of the metaphysical problem of personality, the hypostatic union still remains a mystery, a truth beyond human comprehension. That a human

nature should not possess its own connatural human personality is a fact which transcends the order of nature; that upon this humanity should be bestowed a divine Personality is a sublime and ineffable condescension of God to our race; and no theologian by his speculations intends or hopes to explain the hypostatic union as if it were a natural phenomenon. All that he is able to do is show that, since the concepts of nature and person are distinct from each other, there is no evident contradiction involved in the revealed truth that God has made a created nature his own, by uniting it to his own Person. Whatever be his method of showing this, whether he favour the theory of "mere assumption," or of the substantial mode, or of substantial existence communicated to the humanity of Christ, in common with every other Catholic, theologian or layman, learned or unlettered, he bows in humility before the mystery of a God who unites a human nature to his own Person in order, through that lowly nature of ours, to raise us up to a participation of his.

The first important consequence of the hypostatic union is what is known as the "communication of properties." The person is the subject of attribution; hence it is to the person that the nature and all the properties and activities of the nature are attributed. But Christ is one

person who has two natures. It follows that to him may be rightly attributed either the human nature or the divine nature, and the properties and activities of each. We may say with equal truth that Christ is God and that he is man, that he is the Creator and that—according to his human nature—he is finite. Hence also concrete names signifying one nature may be predicated of concrete names signifying or referring to the other; thus, God is man; the Eternal died upon the cross; God was born of the Virgin Mary; Mary is the Mother of God. It will be noted that only concrete names may be used in this way; and the reason is evident, for only concrete names indicate the person in whom the two natures subsist. Abstract names signify the nature—or properties of the nature —"abstracting" from its existence in a given individual or person. Thus while it is true to say that Mary is the Mother of God, it is false to say that she is the Mother of the divinity. It has been seen in the previous chapter how the whole discussion between Cyril and Nestorius centred in the title of *Theotokos* given to Our Lady. Whatever might be the meaning attached by either side to such words as nature, person, or hypostasis, here was an infallible means of testing the orthodoxy of Nestorius. Were Christ and the Word the same person or

two different persons? In answering this question it was possible to dissemble; but with regard to the divine Motherhood of Our Lady all equivocation was impossible. If this were admitted, then Christ and God were evidently recognized to be one and the same individual, the same person, the same subject of attribution.

From the fact that Christ is one Person, God and man, it follows also that he may not be called the adopted son of God. He is God's own son. A heresy arose in the eighth century called Adoptianism,[1] which consisted in asserting that Christ, admitted to be the natural son of God according to his divinity, was nevertheless his adopted son according to his human nature. This doctrine was condemned by Pope Hadrian I in the year 794. The truth is that in no sense can Christ be said to be the adopted son of God. If Christ, the Word Incarnate, is the natural son of God, born of the Father from all eternity, God cannot adopt him, because to adopt is to elevate to the condition of sonship one who by nature does not possess that status. This form of Adoptianism is thus seen to be a thinly veiled compromise with Nestorianism.

Logically connected with the doctrine of the

[1] To be distinguished from the Adoptianism of the second century to which reference is made in the third chapter (p. 19).

hypostatic union is the obligation of paying to Christ divine worship. If Christ is God, then we must adore him; the conclusion is evident. What is perhaps less obvious is the duty of paying divine cult to the human nature of Christ: less obvious, because to worship the humanity of Christ would seem at first sight equivalent to worshipping a creature. However, it should be noted that theologians distinguish between what they call the material object and the formal object of worship. By the material object they mean the person to whom worship is rendered, by the formal object, the excellence or the perfection in the person which is the motive of the honour paid to him. Clearly, when we worship Christ we worship his whole person, the Word Incarnate, God and man. It is not because he is man that we adore him, but because he is God; nevertheless we do not dissect him, we do not separate his humanity from his divinity in order to adore the latter alone. "The incarnate Word of God," says St Cyril,[1] "since he is the one Son of God, is to be adored, not apart from his flesh, but together with it, just as in honouring a man we honour his soul together with his body." Likewise St Athanasius[2]: "Although the flesh (*i.e.* the humanity of Christ) regarded separately is a part of created things, yet it has

[1] *Apol. contra Orient.*, 8. [2] *Ad Adelphium*, 3.

become the body of God. Thus we do not divide this body from the Word to adore it, nor when we wish to adore the Word do we separate him from his body; but mindful of the words 'The Word became flesh' we recognize as God the one Word incarnate. Who then will be so foolish as to say to the Lord: 'Depart from thy body that I may adore thee'?" Theologians express this truth technically when they say that the humanity of Christ is part of the material object of divine worship, while its formal object is the divinity.

Hence devotion to Christ is not devotion to a mere man, it is the worship of the Word Incarnate, and that worship embraces all that is in him, all that is united with his divine Person. It is here that the wisdom of God's merciful dispensation becomes especially apparent. God became man, in the words of the beautiful Preface for Christmas, *ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur,* "that while we worship God visibly we may be led to the love of things invisible."

This doctrine has an important application in the popular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Jansenists in the synod of Pistoia (1794) attacked this practice on the ground that to worship the human heart of Christ was to give divine honour to a creature. Pope Pius

VI in condemning the Jansenists indicated the dogmatic truth which underlies the devotion to the Sacred Heart; for he accused the Jansenists of "detracting from the pious and proper cult which the faithful pay to the humanity of Christ." In paying divine honour to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the faithful do nothing more than worship the Word Incarnate, with special reference, however, to his humanity, and indeed to that part of his humanity—his Sacred Heart—which custom regards as chiefly affected by human emotions and consequently uses as the symbol of love. "The faithful adore the Heart of Jesus," says Pope Pius VI (*l.c.*), "considered as the heart of Jesus, that is, as the Heart of the Person of the Word to whom it is inseparably united, just as the body of Christ was adorable when for three days it lay dead in the tomb, unsevered and unseparated from the divinity." The object of devotion to the Sacred Heart, therefore, is the physical heart of the Word Incarnate considered as the symbol of his human love for God and for mankind. In addition we adore that human love itself, for it is the human love of the Word Incarnate, the sacred love with which he loved Mary and Joseph, the merciful love that converted the Magdalen and Peter, the love that poured itself out in pity upon all that suffer, the heroic love

for mankind that knew no limit, the love of him who "having loved his own who were in the world, loved them unto the end."

The popularity of this devotion among all faithful Catholics is in fact a sign of their unfailing adherence to the traditional faith of the Church in the unity of the divine Person of Christ. For the Catholic Christ is not merely a great moral teacher, not merely a lovable man, not merely a man who lived in the closest possible union with God; he is God himself. The human perfections that we admire in him and strive to imitate are the human perfections of God, the sympathetic understanding, the human lovableness which has attracted men in all ages to follow him and, if need be, to die for him, have their seat in the heart that has won all hearts, in the human Heart of God himself.

CHAPTER V

TWO DISTINCT NATURES

SINCE the hypostatic union is essentially supernatural, there is no union in nature with which it can properly be compared. Nevertheless, as it is only by comparison with the natural that we are able to form any conception of the supernatural, the Fathers have made use of various analogies in order to illustrate what can never in this life be adequately understood. Of these the best known and most striking is certainly that of the union of body and soul in man. "Just as rational soul and flesh are one man," we read in the Athanasian creed, "so God and man are one Christ." In man body and soul are two (incomplete) substances substantially united to form one person; likewise the humanity of Christ and the divinity are substantially united to constitute one person. But, like all analogies, this must not be pressed too far. Body and soul in man indeed constitute one person, but they form one nature too; whereas in Christ the human nature and the divinity remain distinct and physically unaffected by each other.

Thus to exaggerate the analogy used in the Athanasian Creed would be to fall into the error of Apollinaris or of Eutyches.

The Incarnation involves no change in the Godhead. In God there is no change or shadow of alteration. Hence when St John tells us that the Word became flesh he does not mean that God was changed into man; he can only mean that God, remaining truly God, became truly man also. "Man was raised up to God," says St Augustine; "God did not descend from himself."[1] It has been suggested by some non-Catholic theologians that the Word in becoming man abdicated his divinity for the period of his life upon earth, or at least voluntarily deprived himself of those divine attributes which he found to be incompatible with a truly human experience. The Catholic Church has always resisted such an idea. She has ever strenuously maintained the reality of Christ's human nature against the Docetists; but she is no less emphatic in asserting his perfect and immutable divinity. In the words of St Leo: "Each nature keeps what is proper to it, and just as his divine condition does not destroy his human condition, so his condition of servant does not diminish his divinity."

The words "condition of servant" show that

[1] Ep. 136.

St Leo has in mind the famous text of St Paul in the epistle to the Philippians:[2] "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man." Now it is precisely to this text that appeal is made by the supporters of the "kenotic" theory above mentioned. The words "emptied himself," they claim, can only mean that God deprived himself either wholly or partially of his divinity. And in this, they say, God has given us the most sublime example of humility, inasmuch as he has vouchsafed for our sakes to strip himself of his divine omnipotence. The metaphysical difficulties in the way of this doctrine are, they admit, insuperable, but these are more than counterbalanced by its moral value.

Such a doctrine, however, is quite inadmissible; and no statement can have any moral value if it is a contradiction in terms. However useful it may appear—and the moral utility of the doctrine is, to say the least, debatable—that God should cease to be God, the necessary Being cannot change his nature. The words of St Paul, therefore, must be so interpreted as not to contradict the evident truth that God is immutable. The following paraphrase, perhaps, better ren-

[2] ii, 6-7.

ders the meaning of the original text: "Christ, while he was in the form of God, that is, while he had the nature of God, did not regard his equal rank with God as something to be jealously guarded, but he deprived himself of this, taking the form (or nature) of a servant, so that he appeared externally to be nothing more than a mere man." The second Person of the Blessed Trinity was willing to forgo the external honour which man owed to him as God, being content to appear in the eyes of the world as if he were not God, but merely a man. God deprived himself, therefore, not of the divinity, but of the outward marks of honour due to his divine nature, which was hidden from the eyes of men.

But if God loses nothing by his ineffable union with the humanity of Christ, still less is his divine perfection increased thereby. God incarnate is not greater than God, considered simply as God. One may be inclined, perhaps, by a process of mathematical addition to think of the Word Incarnate as being in sum of reality more than God before the Incarnation. The truth is that, far from any perfection accruing to the infinite essence of God by his union with humanity, it is the human nature which the Word assumed that is raised to an infinite dignity. But at least, it may be urged, God acquires a new relation to finite reality, inasmuch as he

is now united personally to a human nature, whereas formerly he was not. To which it may be answered that the divine relation to finite reality involved in the hypostatic union is no more an increment of divine perfection than the act whereby God creates the universe. The whole change is in the creature; the Creator is eternally changeless. We may apply to the humanity of Christ what St Augustine says of the relation of creatures to God in general: "Without God thou wouldst be less; if thou art with God, he is not the greater on that account. He is not the greater because of thee; but thou without him art less."[1] Hence instead of saying that God formerly was not united to a human nature, but now is united to it, it is more accurate to say with St Thomas that "the humanity which formerly was not united to the divinity now becomes united thereto."[2]

One further difficulty needs to be faced. It is shown in the volume on *The Blessed Trinity* that in God "everything is common to all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity with the exception of those properties which are radicated in the relative opposition between the persons." Thus all the operations of God in regard to creatures are common to Father, Son, and Holy

[1] *In Joannem*, tr. xi. [2] III, Q.1, Art. 1, ad 1.

Ghost. How then is it true that the Incarnation, or the assumption of a human nature, is peculiar to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity? The answer is seen if we distinguish a two-fold aspect of the hypostatic union. This may be regarded actively, that is, as a divine operation whereby God creates a human nature and unites it to a divine Person; and in this sense the work of the Incarnation is common to all three persons of the Blessed Trinity. But it may also be considered passively, that is, in its term, inasmuch as the divine Personality is communicated to the human nature assumed; and in this sense the Incarnation is proper to the Son of God, since he alone made that humanity his own by giving to it his own distinct Personality. To illustrate this point the Fathers use the analogy of three men combining to clothe one of themselves. As St Thomas puts it: "The three Persons operated to unite humanity to the one Person of the Son."[1]

The hypostatic union, therefore, does not change the nature of God. But nor is the humanity of Christ physically affected by the divinity to which it is personally united. The human nature receives personality indeed; but it has been shown that what constitutes personality as such is something distinct from the nature—

[1] III, Q. 3, Art. 4.

in the view of the writer, the act of substantial existence—and this does not change the nature to which it is united. The humanity of Christ, therefore, is in all essential respects similar to our own; Christ became "in all things like as we are, except sin."

The Docetists denied the reality of the body of Christ; they held it impossible that God should be intimately associated with anything material, which they conceived to be essentially evil. In addition to refuting the false presupposition of the Manicheans concerning the origin of matter, the champions of Christian orthodoxy insisted upon the axiom that God assumed our nature in order to save it, and that consequently whatever he did not assume he did not save. The reality of Christ's body was re-asserted later against the Monophysites in the Council of Chalcedon and in the dogmatic Letter of Pope Leo, where we read that "in order to pay our debt an impassible nature was united to a passible one, so that for the sake of our salvation there might be one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who on the one hand was able to die, and on the other hand was immortal."

The Church was no less prompt to reject the error of the Arians who denied that Christ had a human soul, and that of Apollinaris who

denied him a human intellect. It was vain for the latter to claim that the place of the human soul was taken by the Word. Such a substitution is impossible; God cannot become a part of the nature of man; the result of such a combination would be monstrous, a being who is neither man nor God. But of the human intellect of Christ we shall have more to say in the following chapter.

It would seem superfluous, when once it has been stated that the humanity of Christ is perfect in all essentials, to emphasize the fact that he had a human will. Yet there were some in the seventh century who denied this. Just as the Adoptianism of the eighth century was an attempted compromise with Nestorianism, so this heresy of Monotheletism was a faint-hearted concession to Monophysism. The Monotheletes argued somewhat after this manner: if in Christ we admit two wills, the human will and the divine will, we must admit that the will of Christ as man was not the will of God, and that the one was contrary to the other; but Christ is impeccable; therefore in Christ there can have been only one will, the will of God. The argument is not conclusive. It does not follow, if there are two wills in Christ, that they must be contrary to each other. Christ himself has told us that he came not to do his

own will but the will of the Father who sent him; his whole life was one of constant submission to the will of God. Physically in Christ there were two wills, although morally speaking there was but one, because the human will was in all things subject to the divine. If he had no human will his humanity would have been an inert instrument in the hands of God; without a human will all his submission to the will of God—"Not my will but thine be done"—would have been an hypocritical pretence. If he had no human will he had no human virtue, he had no merit, his death was no free-will offering, the Cross is void and we are still in our sins. Christ, therefore, had a human will as well as his divine will, but these were not contrary to each other. In this consisted his obedience unto death; his will was perfectly free, but through divine grace it was ever in perfect conformity with the will of God.

To say that in Christ there are two natures is equivalently to profess a duality of operations in him; for to every nature corresponds its proper operation. One and the same divine Person, the Word Incarnate, performed through his human nature all those operations which are proper to man, while as God he remained for ever in the ineffable exercise of his divine life and activity. Yet although these operations are

physically distinct from each other, the oneness of the divine Agent lent to the whole complex of his human and divine activities a wonderful unity and coherence. All his human operations were under the complete and unfailing control of his holy will, even those wayward emotions which in us are so often an occasion of sin. He was angry, but there was no sin in his anger; his heart was filled with love for men, but in his human emotion of love there was none of that selfishness that so often mars the perfection of human friendship; he wept for the sorrows of others, but there was no despair in his grief; his sensitive heart was cut to the quick by the betrayal of Judas, by the desertion of his friends in his hour of need; he shrank from physical suffering and from death. But not for a moment did his will allow itself to be led by his emotions; he was ever captain of his soul. Holding all his human activities in complete subjection, his human will was none the less itself completely, though freely, subject to the will of God. Thus there is a true sense in which we may speak of *one* operation in Christ, namely, by reason of the complete subordination of the whole of his being and activity to his own divine will. In fact it seems to have been an undue insistence upon what we may call this moral

unity of operation in Christ that led to the heresy of Monotheletism.[1]

One further point remains to be explained before we conclude this chapter. The Fathers and theologians of the Church use the expression "theandric operations." What does this mean? It does not mean that any action of Christ is a mixture of the human and the divine; this would be equivalent to the error of the Monotheletes, and the expression was used by them in that sense. But as used by Catholics it means primarily those actions of Christ in which both his human nature and his divine nature took part. So when Christ worked a miracle his

[1] It was for his failure to make a definite and unequivocal pronouncement on the subject of two wills and operations in Christ that Pope Honorius I was condemned. The third Council of Constantinople (680-681) condemned him as "following the false doctrines of heretics" and for "confirming the impious dogmas of Sergius" of Constantinople, who was the leader of the Monotheletes. But, as is well known, an œcumenical Council has validity only inasmuch as it is confirmed by the Pope, the head of the Council, and therefore the condemnation of Honorius is to be understood in the sense in which it was approved by Pope Leo II, who wrote as follows: "We anathematize the inventors of this error . . . and also Honorius who did not shed lustre upon this apostolic (Roman) Church by the doctrine of apostolic tradition, but allowed this immaculate Church to be stained by a false betrayal." Hence Honorius was anathematized for a practical rather than a dogmatic error, because he failed to condemn a heresy when he should have done so. For a fuller treatment of this controversial question see Dom Chapman: *The Condemnation of Honorius* (C.T.S.).

action was strictly theandric. His divine nature was the principal cause of the miracle, while his humanity co-operated as an instrument.[1] In a wider sense all the human actions of Christ may be called theandric, *i.e.* both human and divine, human by reason of the nature from which they proceed as their principle, divine by reason of the hypostasis or Person whose actions they are. It is for this reason that theologians point out that the human actions of our Redeemer, though they are finite from a physical point of view, are nevertheless of infinite dignity since they are the acts of God himself, and that therefore any act of the Word Incarnate would have been sufficient to save the world from sin.

APPENDIX ON MODERN ERRORS

Such is the Catholic doctrine of the two natures in the one divine Person of Jesus Christ. What we shall have to say subsequently is but a consequence of this portentous fact that Christ is one individual, God and man. But before we proceed to consider these consequences it may not be out of place to give some account of modern erroneous views concerning the Incarnation, not with a view to refuting them—that is not the object of the present series—but in

[1] See below, p. 88.

order that Catholic doctrine by contrast may stand out with greater clearness.

It is significant that all those who, since the Reformation, have departed from the traditional lines laid down so clearly in the Councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople (II), have—at least equivalently—fallen into one of the two heresies of Nestorianism or Monophysism. Certain among the followers of Luther invented a doctrine known as Ubiquitarianism. Having rejected the Catholic teaching concerning the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and faced with the necessity, under pain of parting company with the whole of Tradition, of admitting some sort of presence of Christ in this sacrament, Chemnitz and other Lutherans taught that some of the properties of the divinity were communicated to the human nature of Christ, in particular the attribute of ubiquity. In this manner, they said, the human nature of Christ, since it is everywhere, is present also in the Eucharist. Evidently this is to confuse the two natures. It is true that the communication of properties is one of the consequences of the hypostatic union. But this does not mean that the properties of one nature are communicated to the other. It is one thing to attribute to the *one Person* of Christ the properties and activities of both the human and the

divine natures; but it is quite another to predicate divine attributes of the human nature and vice-versa. The basis of the communication of properties is not the confusion of natures, but the unity of Person.

The philosophy of Descartes in the seventeenth century, and to an even greater extent the critical system of Kant in the early nineteenth, resulted in a secession from what we may call the philosophy of substance. It came to be held by nearly all who were outside the current of the Scholastic philosophy that the "thing in itself," the substance, as distinct from phenomena, was unknowable. In fact the very existence of substance came later to be denied. All that exist, it was held, are the modifications which we experience either within ourselves or from without. What we call substance is nothing else than the sum of the qualities, activities and modifications which we perceive. Hence for most modern philosophers outside the Church the person is simply consciousness, "a series of feelings" as Stuart Mill called it, "with a background of possibilities of feeling."[1]

Günther attempted to reconcile this view of personality with the Catholic dogma of the hypostatic union. In Christ there is a human consciousness and a divine consciousness; but

[1] Hamilton's *Philosophy*, pp. 253 *ff.*

he is only one person, he said, because the human consciousness was absorbed by the divine. Rosmini explained the unity of the Person of Christ by supposing that his human will, which according to him is the dominant factor in personality, completely abdicated the government of his humanity in favour of the divine will to which it was completely subject. In either case Nestorianism is the evident consequence. Ontologically there would be two persons in Christ, a human and a divine, and they would be united only by some psychological or accidental function.

The fact is that neither consciousness nor will *constitutes* personality. Consciousness is the apprehension of the self, it is not the self. The will is an indication of the presence of a personality; ontologically the person is the existing rational substance which thinks and wills. Both the above views have been condemned by the Church because neither is reconcilable with the Catholic doctrine of the hypostatic union.

At the present day all Christians—thus excluding rationalists who, like the Arians and Adoptianists of old, regard Christ as a mere man—admit that in Christ there is a divine as well as a human element. Outside the Catholic Church, however, nearly all are on common ground in rejecting the definitions of Ephesus

and Chalcedon, relics, they say, of an effete philosophy. They are thus reduced to the necessity of combining these two elements in Christ in terms of the modern psychological conception of personality. It is precisely here that non-Catholic Christologies fail.

It cannot be too much emphasized that the Incarnation was not revealed to us by God in philosophical terms. It is not as if God, after the manner of the Delphic oracle, had propounded a riddle to mankind: "Christ is one person having two natures," so that philosophers in the ages to come might discuss the meaning of the words person and nature, and thus arrive at some understanding of what the divine oracle meant. If this were so the meaning of God's revelation would change from age to age, subject to the vagaries of the human mind as it invented now one, now another signification of the words person and nature. It was this modernist conception of the development of Christian doctrine that was condemned by Pope Pius X, and this is the reason of the chaos of modern non-Catholic thought as it endeavours to "re-state" the doctrine of the Incarnation according to the requirements of present-day research. No development of the philosophy of personality, however much more it may teach us concerning the person of Christ, can ever change the

meaning of the simple statement: the Word was made flesh. The Gospel story represents Christ as being God, and as being also man. It was found convenient in the course of time to state this truth by saying that Christ is one person having two natures. Other words might have been used to express the same truth, as long as they did not distort it. The criterion to be applied is not: What is the philosophical meaning of personality as I use the word, but: What did God reveal? If, therefore, any conception of personality is applied to the doctrine of the hypostatic union which is seen to destroy the truth of the simple statement that Christ is truly God and truly man, then the hypostatic union understood in terms of that philosophy is not the revelation that God has committed to his Church.

The more advanced, or Modernistic, school among non-Catholics tends to attenuate the divine element in Christ. God is in Christ, according to these theologians, very much in the same way as he is in any holy man or prophet. God, they say, has expressed himself in Christ as perfectly as it is possible for God to express himself in a creature. But however superlative the terms used to describe the intimacy of the union between Christ and God, it remains, in this theory, that Christ and God are distinct individuals.

This teaching does not differ materially from that of Nestorius.

Others are more careful to safeguard the divinity of Christ, but they are fatally handicapped in their praiseworthy endeavour by their psychological conception of personality. Obsessed with the idea that a person is constituted as such by his consciousness of his individuality, and faced with a human consciousness side by side with a divine consciousness in Christ, they have been forced, in order not to admit two persons in him, to merge the one consciousness in the other, or—as others put it—to make one continuous with the other. But whatever be the process of identification it is inevitable that one of the two is in some way absorbed or suspended. It is here that the kenosis enters as an essential element of their Christology. It is clear, they say, that Christ is truly man; his human consciousness is written large on every page of the New Testament. But many of the divine attributes are irreconcilable with a truly human consciousness and experience. Hence the Deity was temporarily suspended, not indeed essentially, but in some of its attributes, in order to render possible a truly human experience. Evidently these attempts to re-interpret Catholic doctrine in the light of the modern philosophy of person issue only in a form of Monophysitism.

In the Catholic conception of the hypostatic union Christ has two consciousnesses, a human consciousness which is a property of his humanity, and a divine consciousness which is identical with his divinity. To merge them would be to confuse the two natures.[1] Each nature operates in the manner proper to it. Neither absorbs the other, neither interferes with the activities proper to the other, and yet both are united in the one divine Person of the Word made flesh.

That such a mysterious union of two natures in one person should give rise to psychological problems of a unique order is to be expected, and the Catholic theologian is not surprised or disappointed if he is unable to solve them. The Incarnation is a mystery, a truth which apart from divine revelation we could never have known and which, even when we know it, the human mind is unable to fathom. But the fundamental mystery of the Incarnation is not psychological but ontological; the primordial mystery concerning Christ is not so much what he knows or feels about himself, but rather what he is in himself, namely, true God and true man. With this fact in mind the Catholic theologian, guided by revelation, approaches with rev-

[1] How Christ is humanly conscious of his divinity is shown below, p. 80.

erence the study of the human soul of Christ. He knows from the beginning that he cannot hope to explain by the principles of natural human psychology the unique complex of perfections that adorn that soul; he is content to be wise unto sobriety. He asks himself the question: What is certain concerning the soul of Christ? If truths which are certain appear to contradict each other, he knows that the contradiction is merely apparent; so he proceeds, with a full realization of the limits of his knowledge not only concerning God but also concerning the psychology of human nature, to try to harmonize them. If he fails in his reverent attempt to understand, he does not cease to adore him in whom are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.

CHAPTER VI

FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

HOLINESS, in the ordinary acceptance of the word, means voluntary adherence to God, the sovereign Good. Hence God, who infinitely loves himself, is infinitely holy and the source of all holiness in creatures. We call holy those men and women who entirely and voluntarily devote themselves to God, who seek perfectly to conform their lives and actions to God's holy will. But there is a holiness which, as distinct from this holiness of operation, may be called static or substantial holiness, and this we attribute to a creature that is closely connected with God or with divine worship. Thus the person of the Pope is holy or sacred, whatever may be the goodness or otherwise of his moral life, precisely by reason of his office which consecrates him in a special way to God. In this sense even inanimate things—buildings, vessels, and other objects used for the worship of God—are called holy or sacred.

If any creature that is intimately associated with God may on that account be called sacred,

it is clear that the humanity of Christ in this sense is infinitely holy. Nothing could be more closely united to God than the human nature which he has made his own, which is anointed with the divinity itself, which is joined with God in the substantial order of personality. This is the fundamental reason of the reverence which, apart from the consideration of any moral goodness or human virtue in Christ, we owe to his sacred humanity. To that humanity, as has been said, we pay the cult which is due to God alone. The hypostatic union confers upon the human nature of Christ an infinite substantial holiness.

This substantial holiness of the humanity of Christ is the root and foundation of his impeccability and of what we may call his dynamic sanctity. It is unthinkable that sin should besmirch the beauty of the soul which God has made his own. From the law of original sin, evidently, the human nature of Christ was exempt because he was not born by the natural process, his body being formed in the most pure womb of the Virgin Mary. But not only could he not inherit sin, he could not commit it. The hypostatic union requires that all the operations of the assumed human nature should be attributed to the divine Person of the Word; we should therefore have to say, if Christ could sin, that

the Word Incarnate, as man, is able to offend God. The repugnance of such an idea, if it is not metaphysical, is at any rate absolute. If God assumes a human nature, that humanity must be not only sinless but impeccable.

But human holiness is something more than the mere absence of sin; it is a positive supernatural perfection. Elsewhere in this series [1] it is shown that man has been raised to a destiny immeasurably above his nature, that in addition to his natural life he is called upon to live a supernatural, divine life which during our period of probation upon earth consists in sanctifying grace, and in heaven reaches its consummation in the beatific vision. By this grace we are made partakers of the divine nature, adopted sons of God and heirs to eternal life. Hence to be holy, to be pleasing in God's sight, means to possess this divine life of grace, and since Christ is the source of all grace he possesses it in all its fulness. "We saw his glory," writes St John, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth . . . and of his fulness we have all received, grace upon grace."

Sanctifying grace in the soul of Christ "may be conceived," says St Thomas Aquinas, "as resulting from the hypostatic union as light proceeds from the sun." [2] Christ is God's own son.

[1] See Vols. IX, XXVI, XXXV. [2] S.T. III, Q. 7, a. 13.

As God he possesses the divine life not merely by participation but essentially by reason of his eternal generation from the Father. Will he not then, as man, be made a partaker of the divine nature? If to us, whom God has predestined to be conformable to the image of his Son, he has given grace through Christ, so that we are made God's sons by adoption, capable of meriting in God's sight because we are no longer merely his servants but his sons and his friends, surely then upon the soul of Christ which he has made his own he will shower every most precious gift that will make it pleasing in his sight, and especially sanctifying grace by which his human nature is made to partake of the divine life. For, be it noted, although the hypostatic union raises that human nature to an ineffable dignity, although it confers upon it a substantial sanctity which is rightly said to be infinite, yet the assumption of humanity as such brings about no physical change in the human nature assumed, it does not make it a partaker in the divine life, unless there are infused into the human soul those finite habits, sanctifying grace together with the supernatural virtues, which are the principles of supernatural operation.

Christ, therefore, has sanctifying grace. He possesses it in his soul, not as the physical resultant of the hypostatic union, but as that to

which, being God's only-begotten son, he has an hereditary right: "We saw his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace. . . ." Hence the important consequence, that he possessed that grace in all its fulness from the very first moment in which he was conceived in Mary's womb. We receive grace by baptism, thus becoming adopted sons of God, and by hard striving are able to merit an increase of it. Christ, even as man, is the natural son of God, and therefore from the beginning of his human life he received that fulness of grace which it was fitting that God's human soul should have. When, therefore, we are told that he increased in grace [1] we must understand this development, says St Thomas, "in the sense that he worked more perfectly according to the progress of his age to show himself truly man in all that regards God and in all that regards man."

With sanctifying grace are inseparably connected the infused virtues, theological and moral, and so too it was in the soul of Christ. But with his human virtues I have not to deal here, since they are fully described in another volume of the present series.[2] I have only to remark that those virtues must be excluded from the soul of Christ which are incompatible with his impeccability and with the extraordinary

[1] Luke ii, 52. [2] Vol. XII: *Jesus Christ, Model of Manhood.*

perfection of his state. Hence, in the first place, there is no room in his soul for the virtue of repentance, since he had, and could have, no sin of which to repent. Nor could he possess the virtue of temperance, insofar as it is concerned with the repression of disordered desire, since concupiscence, the effect of original sin in us, could have no place in him. Finally, Christ had not, properly speaking, the virtues of faith or hope. We believe what we do not see; we hope for what we do not possess; but, as will be seen below, such was the perfection of the soul of Christ that from the first moment of his human existence he enjoyed the beatific vision, seeing the Godhead face to face, and delighting in undisturbed possession of the sovereign Good. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, too, were in the soul of Christ in all their fulness, rendering the whole of that delicate supernatural organism an apt instrument upon which God with his actual grace played that symphony of celestial melody and harmony which is the life on earth of the Word Incarnate.

We come now to the study of a subject which is full of difficulty, that of the human knowledge of Christ. The difficulty does not arise formally from the fact that Christ, as well as being truly man, is also truly God. When once it has been understood that the two natures exist side

by side, unconfused, in the same person, it follows as a necessary and obvious consequence that in Christ there is a divine knowledge identical with his divine nature and a human knowledge which is an inseparable property of his humanity; and as the natures are unconfused, so there can be no confusion of his divine knowledge with his human knowledge. The one does not take the place of the other, as Apollinaris suggested, nor is the one absorbed or in any way limited by the other, as those would have it who uphold the kenotic theory. If there were any such substitution, intermingling, or absorption, then indeed the difficulty would be insoluble; in fact, as we have seen, any such theories totally destroy the truth of the Incarnation. The real difficulty arises, not from the confusion of one knowledge with the other, but rather from the extraordinary supernatural perfections with which, in consequence of the hypostatic union, the human intellect of Christ was endowed. Natural psychology, or the study of the natural operations of the human mind, is already sufficiently complex, but when we have to include in our study types of knowledge of which on earth we have no experience, then the difficulty of the subject is immeasurably increased. In the human intellect of Christ we have to consider the knowledge that was natural

to him as man, the infused knowledge with which he was preternaturally endowed, and his beatific knowledge, whereby during the whole of his life on earth he saw God face to face.

That Christ had natural human knowledge, few since the time of Apollinaris have dreamed of denying, the tendency outside the Church today being rather to deny that he has any other. For the rest, St Luke tells us that he advanced in wisdom and, unless all the questions that he asked of others and the surprise that on some occasions he showed are to be treated as a mere pretence, we must needs admit that Christ acquired knowledge by natural experience even as we do. His senses and his intellect were essentially similar to ours, and there appears no reason why they should have been denied their normal exercise. On the contrary, if Christ had not the natural use of these faculties it would be difficult to understand why he should have possessed them. Thus the country, the village in which he was reared, the home in which he received instruction and education from his holy Mother and St Joseph, the environment, racial, physical, and social, in which he gradually grew to manhood, all these had, in the all-wise Providence of God, their influence in the formation of his natural character and outlook, a natural character which, it is important to remember,

is a necessary substratum for the perfection of supernatural virtue which makes Jesus Christ the model of perfect manhood. For it is no less true of Christ than it is of us that the supernatural perfects nature, but does not destroy it.

But if it would be erroneous to say that the human knowledge of Christ was in no way subject to development, it would be still more seriously wrong to restrict that knowledge to what he could learn by purely natural means. It is the teaching of the Church, not indeed explicitly defined by any Pope or Council, but enshrined in the unanimous consent of all theologians, that the human intellect of Christ, in addition to knowledge naturally obtained, was supernaturally endowed with the beatific vision of God. The faithful, with that instinct for divine truth which is a sign of the constant presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, have felt that the fulness of grace which befits the humanity assumed by the Word requires that he should possess the divine life, not merely in its incipient stage of sanctifying grace, but in full blossom, in the perfection of its ultimate development, to wit, the Beatific Vision; that if we, who are but God's adopted sons, must pass through a time of probation that we may be found worthy to enter into our inheritance, he, who is the only-begotten of the Father, must

possess that divine heritage from the moment in which he first had a human nature; that he who is to lead us to beatitude must himself be already in enjoyment of it; that the human mind which God has made his own should not be debarred by any veil from looking upon the Godhead with whom it is hypostatically united.

Can we suppose that he "that was the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," that he who gave witness to what he had seen, walked in the relative darkness of faith? Christ, as man, knew that he was God; he knew that with his human nature the second Person of the Blessed Trinity was hypostatically united, and his knowledge of the hypostatic union and all that was involved in the mystery of the Incarnation must have been perfect and complete. Consciousness of personality is an immediate perception of self, and the only way in which the human intellect of Christ could have had intuitive knowledge of his divine personality was by seeing God face to face. Even the infused knowledge that is given to the angels could not give him a full understanding of the mystery that so closely touched his own personality. Christ as man knew that he was God because, being truly and in the fullest sense the son of God, with his human mind he saw God "as he is."

Wayfarers on this earth, we see God as he is imperfectly reflected in the finite works of his hands. The blessed in heaven, on the contrary, see creatures as mirrored in the essence of God, the first Cause of them all. Thus Christ by his beatific knowledge not only sees God but in God he sees also all creatures that are, have been or will be; he sees the whole created universe of which he is appointed heir and king; he sees the innermost thoughts of all men, of whom he is the Judge, he sees the salvation or—alas—the damnation of the souls of which he is the Redeemer; in a word, although, his human intellect being finite, he cannot exhaust the divine intelligibility, he knows all things that in any point of time have existence. Add to this the infused knowledge which, according to the common view of theologians, Christ also possessed, and we may well understand how St Paul could speak of Christ as one "in whom are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and the knowledge of God." [1]

That God should thus have lavished all his most precious gifts upon the human nature which he had assumed is what we should have expected. In fact theologians lay down as an indubitable principle that the soul of Christ is endowed with every perfection, natural or

[1] Col. ii, 3.

supernatural, which a human soul is capable of receiving. As the king honours his spouse, so God has delighted to honour the soul to which he has indissolubly wedded his divine Person. Small wonder, then, that the soul of Christ is impeccable; for he who sees God face to face can find nothing in creatures to diminish his loyalty to the sovereign Good; well might the wise men of the synagogue be confounded by the questions and answers of the boy of twelve, and those who heard his discourses say among themselves, "Never did anyone speak as this man"; for Christ spoke to them in human language the truth that he derived directly from the vision of God, who is infinite Truth itself.

Hence the faithful have ever refused to admit in Christ as man ignorance concerning any matter pertaining to his person or office. It is true that some of the Fathers in their controversial writings against Arianism said that Christ, who was omniscient according to his divine nature, was ignorant according to his humanity.[1] But it should be borne in mind that in these cases the human knowledge of Christ was not the question directly at issue. The Arians, who held that the Word was not God but a creature, pointed to certain texts of the Gospels where it is stated that Christ grew in knowledge, or that he asked

[1] *E.g.* St Athanasius, *Or.* 3 *contra Arianos*, n. 37.

questions, or that he was ignorant of the day of judgement, as showing that the Word is not omniscient and therefore not God. Catholics found an easy reply to such arguments in attributing such development and ignorance to his human intellect.

But when in the sixth century the question of Christ's human omniscience was explicitly raised and ignorance attributed to the human intellect of Christ by the sect of Agnoëtes, such a contention was rejected as impious and contrary to Catholic tradition. Suffice it to quote these words of St Gregory the Great, written to St Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria: "I write to your Holiness to tell you what I think of your book against the heretical Agnoëtes, and also to explain my delay. . . . In your teaching against these heretics there is much that I admire and nothing that displeases me. . . . So perfect is the harmony between your teaching and that of the Latin Fathers that I see, without surprise, that the Holy Spirit is the same in spite of the difference of language." [1]

The chief difficulty, of course, was the famous text: [2] "Of that day and hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father." Space does not allow of an enumeration, still less of a discussion of the various ex-

[1] *Epist.* Bk. X, Ep. 39. [2] Mark xiii, 32.

planations of this text given by the Fathers in order to reconcile it with the traditional doctrine of the omniscience of Christ.[1] It is sufficient for our present purpose to remark that their very attempt to make such a reconciliation is a proof that they regarded it as uncatholic to attribute ignorance to Christ.

The first difficulty presented by the co-existence in Christ of these three types of knowledge—natural or experimental, infused, and beatific—is that, given the third, the former two would seem to be superfluous. It is a difficulty, but not a very serious one. If Christ had possessed only beatific and infused knowledge his natural powers of intellect would have remained inoperative, and the whole of his natural human experience as depicted to us in the gospel-story would have been fictitious. Nor is his infused knowledge superfluous, since this gives to

[1] Of all the explanations proposed the following seems to the writer the most satisfactory. Christ often disclaims powers, which he really possesses, inasmuch as it does not pertain to his mission to use them. Thus he says that he has not come to judge the world (John xii, 47); although elsewhere he says that the Father has given him all judgement (*ib.* v, 22); that it is not his to grant that one may sit on his right or on his left in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xx, 23), although this is indeed the right of the Judge of all mankind. In the same sense he denies that he, the Son, knows the day of judgement; it is not among the things which he has come from the Father to reveal. *Cf.* John viii, 26, 28; xiv, 10: "The words that I speak to you I speak not of myself."

his natural intellect a preternatural perfection which otherwise he could never have acquired. It is true that the first two types of knowledge did not add to the sum of what he already knew in contemplating the essence of God, but, mysterious as the whole of this supernatural psychology must ever remain, even we are able to appreciate that to know a thing in three ways is better than to know it only in one. Nor did this superior knowledge render his human experience nugatory or merely apparent. He truly advanced in wisdom, adding experience to experience, he learned obedience through the things that he had suffered, he truly wondered at the faith of the humble as he was shocked by the incredulity of the Pharisees. In his natural human life nothing was abnormal, for, again, grace perfects nature but does not destroy it.

More formidable is the mystery of Christ's Passion. It is not for me to describe his sufferings: bodily torments, emotional sorrows, mental distress and pain beyond all human conception, sufferings which were increased by the very perfection of his knowledge. A vivid picture of them is drawn in another volume of this series.[1] But how, if Christ really enjoyed the Beatific Vision during the whole of his human life, can he have suffered these unspeakable torments?

[1] Vol. XIII. *Jesus Christ, Man of Sorrows.*

Surely, if we admit that the soul of Christ was delighted with the possession of the sovereign Good, all the sufferings of which we read in the gospels must have been a pretence, or at any rate must have been considerably alleviated by his beatific knowledge.

The incompatibility of his joy with his very real suffering is but apparent. The beatific vision is a purely intellectual operation, and even our own experience tells us that spiritual joy is not incompatible with intense bodily pain. It is true that in us physical pain may eventually occasion such spiritual exhaustion that the joy of the mind begins to fade, but this is due to the fact that none of our spiritual operations are entirely independent of the body; the human mind cannot work without the co-operation of the brain. The beatific vision, however, is entirely independent of bodily organs, and the joy of the mind in the contemplation of God is unruffled by the torments that the body may endure. Have we not seen heroes suffer tortures for an ideal and rejoice in their pain? Was not the face of St Stephen transfigured by spiritual joy while in his mangled body he suffered still?

Even the more refined torments that the imagination begets may co-exist with the joy of the mind, because here again the suffering is in the sensitive or emotional part of man, and thus

may leave the spirit undisturbed. Hence Christ was able to be supremely happy in the contemplation of the divine essence and yet, although he accepted his Passion willingly and with joy, to feel all the shrinking horror that a sensitive nature must experience at the thought of suffering and death to come, an emotional stress to which he gave utterance in his prayer to his Father: "If it be possible, let this chalice pass from me; yet not my will but thine be done."

But more grievous far than all this was the mental torture that he felt when he thought of the sins of mankind, of the many souls for whom his Passion would be in vain, of the friend that had betrayed him to death, of the false friends that would betray him until the end of time. Here was a sorrow that sorely afflicted his spirit, and yet he was ever filled with a spiritual joy that no sorrow could abate. It is here that we reach the heart of the psychological mystery of Christ. Are we not perhaps too venturesome when we seek to analyse the mysteries of his spirit? Our human loves, our human joys and sorrows are but puny affections when compared with the beatific love, the superhuman joy and the unfathomable sorrow of the Redeemer. But it is only by looking into our own hearts that we are able to see some reflexion of the great heart of Christ. There is no purer love, no love

more unselfish than the love of the mother for her child. Yet a mother will give her only child to God with joy, a joy that is not abated by her very real pain at the thought that she may never see her child again on earth. Does this perhaps help us to understand that the sins of mankind, which so grieved our Redeemer in his agony, could yet be a subject for intense rejoicing as he contemplated in the beatific vision the mercy of God for sinners and the infinite wisdom whereby he draws good even out of evil? That his pain at the neglect and scorn of many had its counterpart in the joy and consolation that many others would give him by offering themselves in reparation? That his every torment added to his joy, that he delighted in his sorrow, because he suffered for love of us? I end this subject on a questioning note, for none may dare to say that he has solved the mystery of Jesus Christ.

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Of one more perfection of the soul of Christ a few words must be written, namely, his miraculous power. It is a commonplace with the Fathers to speak of the humanity of Christ as the "organ," or the instrument, of his divinity. The principal author of miracles, evi-

dently, is God, who alone is able by his omnipotence to supersede the forces of nature. But history attests that on many occasions God has used instruments to bring about these marvels, either to authenticate a message to mankind [1] or to manifest the sanctity of the miracle-worker. Greatest of all wonder-workers, however, is Christ, both by reason of the number of his miracles and their extraordinary and varied character, and by reason of the permanence of this miraculous power in his human nature. I say that this power was habitual in him, not in the sense that it was a property of his human nature but that, unlike others whom God has from time to time used as the instruments of his omnipotence, Christ was able, in virtue of the power constantly communicated to his human nature by God, to work a miracle whenever he wished.[2] As to its extent St Thomas thus expresses the traditional view: "He had power to bring about any miraculous change which might be directed to the end of the Incarnation, which is to renew all things in heaven or on earth." [3]

[1] See Vol. I: *Faith and Revealed Truth,* p. 20.

[2] *Cf.* Matt. viii, 2-3. The permanence of this miraculous power in Christ is compared by some theologians to the habitual power of consecrating the Eucharist possessed by the priest.

[3] III, Q. 13, art. 2. To this miraculous power also belongs the complete control that Christ possessed over his own life. He died because he willed to die; not only in the sense that

More marvellous still than this power of working miracles is the power of sanctifying the souls of men which both Scripture and Tradition assert to have been inherent in the humanity of Christ. Thus, as a proof that he had worked the invisible wonder of forgiving sin, he worked the visible miracle of curing a man's bodily infirmity,[1] and the woman who had anointed his feet was privileged to hear from his lips those comforting words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee."[2] Hence it is too little to say that Christ merited grace for us through his humanity. He does more than this; he is also the efficient instrumental cause of our sanctification, inasmuch as God uses this sacred humanity as the instrument for infusing grace into our souls. In this it is that our condition differs from that of the just under the Old Testament. They received grace in view of the merits of Christ who was to come; for those who preceded his coming Christ

he offered himself voluntarily to his executioners, but that, even when his physical weakness had reached the stage at which naturally he must have died, he was able, had he so willed, to keep himself in life. "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me; but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to take it up again" (John x, 17-18). Hence also Christ as man was the (instrumental) cause of his own resurrection, although its principal author was his divinity. Thus we read in the Scriptures both that God raised Christ from the dead (*e.g.* 1 Cor. xv, 15) and also that Christ raised himself (John ii, 19).

[1] Matt. ix, 2-6. [2] Luke viii, 48.

could not be other than the meritorious cause of sanctification. But for us who live after him his humanity is also the instrument by means of which that grace is produced in us; and it is for this reason that the Council of Ephesus calls the flesh of Christ "life-giving." It was the source of supernatural life to those who, like St John, saw him with their eyes and handled him with their hands; [1] it is the source of grace to all men who still receive of his fulness. "To give grace or the Holy Spirit," says St Thomas,[2] "belongs to Christ as God authoritatively (*i.e.* as principal cause); but it belongs to him also as man to give grace as an instrument; for his humanity was the instrument of the divinity; and therefore the actions of that humanity were salutary to us, causing grace in us not only by way of merit but also by a certain efficiency (*i.e.* as an efficient instrumental cause)." During his life on earth Christ exercised this instrumental causality in respect of grace directly through his human nature. Now, however, it is communicated to the sacraments which he has instituted. "The principal efficient cause of grace," to quote St Thomas again,[3] "is God himself, to whom the humanity of Christ stands in the relation of conjoined instrument and the sacraments as separate

[1] *Cf.* 1 John i, 1. [2] III, Q. 8, art. 1, ad 1.
[3] III, Q. 62, art. 5.

instruments; hence salutary virtue flows from the divinity of Christ through his humanity into the sacraments."

It is significant that our study of the humanity of Christ should have brought us finally to the mention of the sacraments; so true is it that the sacramental system, since it is but the continuance of the divine economy of the Incarnation, is essential in Catholic doctrine and practice. For the centre of that system is one Sacrament of unique excellence, the sacrament which is the source of the sanctifying power of all the others, because it contains the life-giving humanity of the Redeemer: the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ himself.

In speaking of the Eucharist, which he proposed to institute, Christ uses words which I cannot but quote here, because they seem to sum up in a wonderful way the whole purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God: "As the living Father sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me the same also shall live by me." Christ lives by the Father according to his divinity, because he has received the divine nature by eternal generation. But he lives by the Father also according to his humanity, for his soul is filled with sanctifying grace, which is nothing else than a participation in man of the divine nature and of the life of God. Sent by

the living Father to bestow that life upon us, the Son of God through his human nature pours out into our souls the grace which he possesses in all its fulness, and in order that the source of grace may be accessible to all men in all ages he institutes a Sacrament under the form of food and drink, wherein his life-giving humanity is truly, really and substantially present, so that by eating his flesh and drinking his blood all men may live by Christ as he lives by the Father, with that supernatural life of grace which is a participation of the divine life of the Blessed Trinity.

And so we have returned to the point from which we set out. Christianity is the religion of the Fatherhood of God, from whom all Paternity in heaven and earth is named. Father from all eternity of his only-begotten Son, God has willed through the humanity of his Incarnate Son to raise up to himself other sons, sons by adoption and co-heirs with Christ of eternal life, sons "who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

EPILOGUE

CHRIST THE KING

THEREFORE Christ is King. "A child is born to us and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. He shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgement and with justice, from henceforth and for ever." [1] Christ is King, not only as God, but as man also. He is King, not only by reason of the perfection of his humanity, not only because he has purchased us as his people by redeeming us; he is King because he is the Word Incarnate. "He has dominion over all creatures," says St Cyril of Alexandria, the great champion of orthodoxy against Nestorius,[2] "a dominion not seized by violence nor usurped, but his by essence and by nature." As God he is the eternal Lord and Creator of all; becoming man he re-

[1] Isaias ix, 6-7. [2] *In Luc.* x.

ceived from his Father the royal dignity as the rightful attribute of his human nature; for it was only fitting that a manhood joined in unity of Person with the Godhead should be "appointed heir of all things"; [1] it is his birthright as the Word Incarnate to receive the homage of all creatures. Hence the whole of creation hails his advent with the cry of the Psalmist: [2] "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be lifted up, O eternal gates; and the king of glory shall enter in."

May our meditation on the Word Incarnate bear fruit in a deeper love for his sacred Person and in a spirit of whole-hearted loyalty to Christ the King, so that he, when all are subdued to him, may offer us to his Father, "that God may be all in all." [3]

[1] Heb. i, 2. [2] Ps. xxiii, 7. [3] 1 Cor. xv, 28.

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